

February, 2013



# the CityScene



*The City of Murfreesboro employee newsletter*

## Points of interest:

- Congratulations to those who have reached milestones as employees of the City.
- Way to go Tax and Finance for being awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 14th year and for adding your second Distinguished Budget Award to the list.

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## Matt Jarratt wins 1st STARS award for 2013

The City of Murfreesboro announces that Matt Jarratt, an employee of the City's Information Technology Department, is the first STARS award recipient for



Matt Jarratt, of Murfreesboro Information Technology Department, was named first STARS award winner of 2013.

2013.

Jarratt was recognized at the Jan. 31 meeting of Murfreesboro City Council, and a video of the presentation can be found online at [www.murfreesborotn.gov](http://www.murfreesborotn.gov).

"He is the fourth recipient of the STARS (Succeeding Through Attitudes Reflecting Service Excellence) award," Service Excellence Coordinator Shannon Logan said, "which continues to recognize the City's greatest assets - its employees."

Jarratt received two nominations for his work. His demeanor, his willingness to help and his fun attitude were noted in the nominations.

He began his career at the City of Murfreesboro six

years ago, as a part-time employee of the Building and Codes Department.

Though originally hired part time to transfer paper data into electronic format, his exceptional computer skills were recognized, and he was eventually hired as a full-time employee in MIS (Management Information Systems). He continues to be an integral part of the City's technology plans as a member of the City's recently renamed Information Technology (IT) Department.

"Matt is undeniably one of the 'Rock STARS' of the City of Murfreesboro," Chris Lilly, the City's IT Director, said. "He is key in supporting and creating solutions for

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## Susan McGannon Reappointed to Board of Professional Responsibility

The Tennessee Supreme Court reappointed City Attorney Susan McGannon to another three-year term on the Board of Professional Responsibility, ending Dec. 31, 2015.

The Board consists of nine lawyers and three non-lawyers from across the state. She is the appointee for District IV which in-

cludes White, Van Buren, Pickett, Putnam, Overton, Clay, Franklin, Moore, Bedford, Wilson, Trousdale, Warren, Fentress, Cumberland, Smith, Jackson, Coffee, Lincoln, Marshall, DeKalb and Macon in addition to Rutherford and Cannon County.

The Board assists the Court by issuing formal ethical opinions for the guidance

of attorneys interpreting the Rules of Professional Conduct and by administering the system of discipline established by Supreme Court for the protection of clients and the public.



Susan McGannon  
Murfreesboro City Attorney



**ROB LYONS**  
*Murfreesboro  
City Manager*

Dear fellow employee:

The City's wellness program has been launched and we are excited about it! Please note that enrollment is already underway and you should have received detailed instructions on how to enroll from your department.

We are excited about this new addition to our benefits. You are the City's most important resource and helping you and your family get healthier is a priority for us. As you know, health care costs across the country continue to rise and this is true for Murfreesboro also.

We also know that 74 percent of health issues may be preventable. We are hoping to help our employees get healthier and drive down costs at the same time.

Under the voluntary wellness program, employees who enroll will complete a free and confidential health risk assessment. All health information will be between you, Healthscope, our third party administrator, and IHS, our wellness vendor. The City will not receive any personal health information. You can also elect to have IHS send your personal physician a copy of your confidential results.

Actively working, benefit eligible City employees who complete the Preventative Health Evaluation in February and March 2013 will receive an Employer Sponsored Flexible Spending Account debit card up to \$250.00. Please see the incentive flyer sent out to all departments for specific details on the incentive plan.

We're also looking to upgrade the Fit for Success program. We hope to have more information about this in the coming weeks.

We hope that you see this as an opportunity to obtain important information about your health. This will also be a great time for you to utilize an employer sponsored flex debit card for all your eligible health expenses for the year.

As always, thank you for your excellent service to our City! Please let us know what we can do to better help you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Lyons". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "L" and a trailing flourish.

# Naming the Wellness Program

## WHAT'S MY NAME?

The City is looking for a catchy name for the new Wellness Program initiative and can use your help. The Wellness Program is designed to be a proactive process to become aware of learning how to make healthy choices. Wellness itself is more than just not being ill; it focuses on keeping your body in good condition so it runs more efficiently and you stay well longer. This is an ongoing program that belongs to you—and we want your help in naming it! Please submit your ideas to: [benefits@murfreesborotn.gov](mailto:benefits@murfreesborotn.gov) or through interoffice mail to the attention of Pam Russell. Ideas will be accepted through February 15, 2013. We will announce the name of the Wellness Program and the employee that coined it in the next news letter.

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## Benefit Eligibility

### Reminder - Benefit Eligibility

During open enrollment several employees enrolled dependent children into benefits not available to them based on their age and/or student status. Changes in benefit elections have been made to correct the errors however, as a reminder, the following dependent children rules apply:

Provider	Dependant Eligibility - (Children)
HealthScope Benefits	up to age 26. Cannot have insurance available to them either through their employer or a spouse's employer
Delta Dental	ages 19 through 24 must be a full-time student
Assurant Dental	ages 24 through 25 must be a full-time student
VSP (vision)	ages 19 through 24 must be a full-time student
Minnesota Life	ages 20 through 25 must be a full-time student

Should you have any questions regarding benefit eligibility please contact Karen Heyduck in Human Resources or email [benefits@murfreesborotn.gov](mailto:benefits@murfreesborotn.gov).

## **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!**

**25 Years**

**Gary Whitaker**

**Jennie Howse**

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**20 Years**

**Garry Templeton**

**James Wyatt**

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**15 Years**

**Paul Mongold**

**Donald Schubert**

**Sean Williams**

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**10 Years**

**Peggy Goodwin**

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**5 Years**

**Peter D. Cameron**

**Betsy Davison**

**Steve Huffman**

**James Martin**

**Matt Jarratt**

**Donald Belcher**

## City news in brief ...

### **MPD stats show crime in Murfreesboro down 8%**

Part I crimes decreased in Murfreesboro by 8% in 2012 according to Police Department reports. Part I crimes include murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny or theft of a vehicle and arson.

Crime trend data indicates decreases in three areas of reportable crime, increases in four and no change in one, according to a department press release.

"One of the top priorities of the Mayor, Council, City Management and the Police Department is to create safe and livable neighborhoods throughout our city," Murfreesboro Police Chief Glenn Chrisman said.

"In 2012, officers and detectives focused on reducing residential burglaries through the use of traditional and innovative strategies," he continued.

"In 2013," he said, "we will continue our efforts at reducing personal and property crimes."

The department will continue to offer Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) classes for women at various locations throughout the city.

Also, criminal investigators working with the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) will continue to pursue criminal investigations and prosecutions of these reported incidents. Over half of the reported rapes were linked to an acquaintance.

Police remind women to say "no" clearly and firmly, be repetitive, and remember that offenders look to take advantage of situations in which a potential victim's judgment and ability to act defensively is impaired.

Robberies increased by nine in 2012, the release stated. Police advise awareness of your surroundings and to immediately report suspicious activity. Businesses should practice good cash control by maintaining the minimum amount of cash in drawers as well as maintain working alarms, lighting, and surveillance cameras.

Officers responded to a record number (106,102) of calls for service in 2012, the release stated, or a 5 percent increase averaging 301 calls per day.

Officers and detectives were responsible for over

11,500 criminal charges, or a 20 percent increase from 2011. Uniformed officers issued 17,908 citations, 24,334 warning citations and 23,494 parking citations and the department's MPACT Unit and other uniformed officers made 824 Driving Under the Influence (DUI)-related arrests. The Automated Red-Light Enforcement System issued 24,111 citations during 2012, bringing the total number of citations to over 74,000.

The City of Murfreesboro consists of over 55 square miles and continues to grow steadily, reaching an estimated population of 111,327, according to the decennial census in 2010. Middle Tennessee State University has also seen significant growth and currently has over 26,000 students enrolled.

### **MFRD child safety seat inspections successful**

Fire & Rescue Department officials say the Child Safety Seat inspections at Fire Station 2 at 2880 Runnymede Drive Jan. 24 were a big success.

Twenty-five MFRD personnel, along with a few employees from Murfreesboro Police Department and Rutherford County Sheriff's Of-

fice are now certified Child Safety Seat Technicians.

This inspection station was the final requirement for the students' 32-hour class.

Assistant Fire Marshal Carl Peas was on site to assist. Peas completed the course in October. "All cars that came through the inspection had at least one mistake," said Peas. "The most common mistakes were the placement of the seats and the tightness of the seatbelts."

"This inspection was the final requirement for a 32-hour class that will officially certify 25 fire personnel to safely and correctly install child safety seats," Murfreesboro City Manager Rob Lyons wrote in his Jan. 21 through 25 weekly report. "This is an excellent addition to the services provided by Fire & Rescue and supplements the work done by the Police Department."

If you missed yesterday's inspection, there are other opportunities for you to have your child's safety seat checked. Please contact MFRD Administration Monday through Friday at 615-893-1422 or Headquarters on the weekend at 615-849-2661 for more information.

E-mail Ashley McDonald for more information or call her at 893-1422.



# Local growth on upswing: end of year report

Though far less affected than some areas of the country, Murfreesboro has felt the effects of what some have called the worst recession since the Great Depression.

However, from the comprehensive 2012 Year End Building Construction Activity Report published each year by Murfreesboro Planning Director Joseph Aydelott, the local economy seems to be turning around.

The planning director was upbeat.

"Economic recovery appears to be underway as evidenced by the number of items submitted for plans review and inclusion on the Planning Commission's agenda," Aydelott said. "For the past several months there have been considerably more items each month than there were during the early part of 2012 and all of 2011, 2010, and 2009."

"Year-end reports show that the year ended with considerably more permits issued for construction in 2012 than for 2011."

Two statistics stuck out.

"Total valuation of construction in 2012 was \$378,015,974," Aydelott wrote, "which was an increase (\$175,917,827) over the 2011 valuation of \$202,098,147."

Many real estate experts believe the inventory of available lots for housing is one measure of a community's economic health. From a high in 2008 of 2,237, lots available had dropped by nearly 1,000 to 1,254 in 2012, dropping 268 of those in just one year from 2011 to 2012.

Describing the report, the director wrote "Much of this information is compiled from computer-generated year-end reports and is helpful in gaining insight into how much the City has grown during the past year and how it is poised for future growth."

During calendar year 2012, Murfreesboro Planning Commission and Planning, Engineering and Traffic staff reviewed 26 preliminary plats and gave preliminary approval to subdivisions with 311 lots.

Sixty-two final plats were reviewed and final approval given to 389 lots, planning commission and planning

staff reviewed 119 site plans and during the year there were 28 applications for rezoning, five annexation studies, 10 ordinance amendments and three Rights of Way actions.

During 2012, the planning commission held 23 regular meetings during which it conducted 47 public hearings.

The Murfreesboro Board of Zoning Appeals conducted 67 public hearings to consider 10 applications for variances from the sign ordinance, 22 for setback or bulk variances, one application for a parking variance, 40 for special use permits, three special use permit amendments and one weeds and grass exemption request.

The building and codes department issued 3,281 electrical permits during 2012 and 536 single-family residences and 464 multiple family units totaling 1,000 dwelling units. This was slightly over twice that of 2011 when 408 permits were issued for single-family, multi-family and hotel/motel units.

The construction board of adjustments and appeals met seven times during 2012 and heard 20 requests for variances from building and codes requirements or to modify an order from the chief building official.

Also during the year, the Murfreesboro Historic Zoning Commission met eight times to review eight applications for Certificates of Appropriateness, one of which was denied. There were three administrative approvals for Certificates of Appropriateness and the commission held one special meeting.

As expected of the City's diligent staff, all members of the planning commission, board of zoning appeals and professional staff earned education credits as required by Public Chapter 862.

For more information, please call the Murfreesboro Planning and Engineering Department at 615-893-6441 or the entire report is available on the City's website at [www.murfreesborotn.gov/planning](http://www.murfreesborotn.gov/planning).



# The Flu is no fun

Influenza activity remains high across most of the United States according to Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) latest *Flu-View* report, and it continues to recommend hand washing and sanitizer as good ways to avoid it.

But, says Murfreesboro City Schools (MCS) School Health Coordinator Meri-Leigh Smith, the best way to avoid the flu - and it's not too late - is to be vaccinated.

Under City Health Benefits, flu vaccinations are free.

The early onset of the season is likely why flu is as widespread as it is, Smith said, and MCS has followed that trend. No schools have had to be closed, however, and teachers and sanitation personnel are working to make sure it stays that way.

CDC continues to recommend influenza vaccination

for people who have not yet been vaccinated this season and antiviral treatment as early as possible for people who get sick and are at high risk of flu complications.

Smith agrees and recommends the best way to avoid getting the flu is to keep hands washed and use anti-bacterial solution whenever possible.

"The flu is a respiratory disease transmitted by droplets in the air (from an affected person's sneeze)," she said. "The symptoms can begin a lot like a cold with a headache accompanied by feeling tired and worn out.

If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, you should see your doctor and follow his or her instructions.

Anti-viral medications like Tamiflu may be prescribed to help ease the flu's duration.

Children should see the



school nurse when they feel sick, Smith said. If the temperature is elevated and there is a general feeling of malaise, the nurse will most likely call the parents to come get the child and advise them to see a doctor.

Once a diagnosis is confirmed, the affected person should stay home, she said.

Except for Guam, which has reported no cases of flu and Hawaii, which has experienced sporadic activity, every state in the union has reported a high incidence of the flu, ac-

## Special events in the City of Murfreesboro



Murfreesboro Mayor Tommy Bragg wanted to show his appreciation to those who led the City's of Murfreesboro's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary so he hosted an honorary luncheon for the team. Front Row, left to right are Nate Williams, Chris Shofner, Lanny Goodwin, Dr. Phyllis Washington, Mona Herring, Lee Ann Walker. Back row, left to right are City Council member Eddie Smotherman, John Hood, former Mayor Richard Reeves, Greg Lyles, Angela Jackson, Terry Ann Womack, Don Witherspoon, Andy Womack and Bragg. A good time was had by all.



The City Schools Foundation recently presented a \$30,000 parity check to Murfreesboro City Schools. Parity dollars are given to schools with a greater than 50 percent free and reduced meal ratio to help fund projects typically funded by school fundraisers and parent teacher organizations. Additionally, The City Schools Foundation presented over \$45,000 to teachers in Murfreesboro City Schools for science, math and technology grants. From left are Dr. Tammy Grizzard, Mr. Joe Thompson, Ms. Robin Newell, Mr. Doug Young, Dr. Gene Loyd, Dr. Kim Fowler.



Murfreesboro Police Department held its first "Gun Buy Back" initiative recently. Considering the very cold and windy weather and as it was a first time event, the department considers it was very successful. This program is designed for citizens to rid themselves of unwanted weapons in the home or that no longer work. The department thanked its partners Goldy Wade and Kenny Williams with the N.A.A.C.P. and Pastor Steve Odom with Central Christian Church allowed use of its parking lot. Nineteen weapons were surrendered, including seven rifles, two shotguns, six semi-automatic pistols and four revolvers. Based on its success, more Gun Buy-Back events will be planned.



Murfreesboro City Councilman Doug Young (at the podium) kept members of Leadership Rutherford enthralled during his presentation on city government.



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every department in the City, and he offers excellent support to employees and citizens with a smile."

Jarratt helped Georgia Meshotto to transition to an all-electronic agenda format for Murfreesboro City Council and citizens. She said she could not thank Matt enough for his helpfulness and ongoing encouragement. "...As employees," Georgia Meshotto, an employee who nominated Jarratt, pointed out, "we not only benefit from his knowledge of information and electronics, but citizens benefit through the efficiency of City services as a result of better-trained employees and creating a better quality of life for both the internal and external customers".

"We ask a lot of our employees," Logan said, "and the STARS Awards Committee felt that Matt routinely and genuinely represents great character, patience, and professionalism in his dealings with both internal customers and external customers who have questions about the City's IT resources, website, etc.

"Matt is a great example to showing that good internal customer service is the key to providing great external customer service," she added.

"The City of Murfreesboro wishes to recognize employees that go above and beyond what is expected to provide top quality service for both internal and external customers," Logan said. "As part of the award, Matt will receive \$25.00 and one day of annual leave in accordance with the City's vacation policy.

"Congratulations to Matt Jarratt and the Information Technology Department on his STARS award!," she continued. "Thank you to all of our employees who contribute every day, and we look forward to a year full of STARS in 2013."

## 2011—12 audit show's City is financially sound

Murfreesboro's Tax and Finance Department won its 14<sup>th</sup> Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association this year and added its second GFOA Distinguished Budget Award to the mix for its FY 12 budget.

The announcement was made by James R. Jobe of Jobe, Hastings and Associates, *Certified Public Accountants*, the firm that conducted the independent audit.

"Murfreesboro is one of only a few cities in Tennessee to get these awards," Jobe told Murfreesboro City Council during its Jan. 10 meeting. "The standards for getting these (prestigious certificates) are way above the normal standards.

"We do these (audits) for two main reasons," he continued. "First, the Tennessee Comptroller requires the audit but it also gives you and the citizens assurances the (City's) financial condition is sound.

"The preparation of this report could not have been accomplished without the efficient and dedicated services of the entire staff of the finance and administration departments," the audit states.

"Appreciation is expressed to City employees throughout the organization, especially those who were instrumental in the successful completion of this report."

The independent auditor's report indicates the City has received an unqualified, or clean opinion, for fiscal year 2012.

The General Fund is the chief operating fund of the City. Overall, the City's general tax revenue increased \$3.8 million, of which 77 percent came from growth in sales tax. Expenditures were \$8.8 million less than budget. Most of the department's operating expenditures remained flat and the City

enjoyed lower interest rates for debt service, which reduced the amount transferred to the General Fund by \$1.4 million. Long term debt decreased by \$22 million during the year.

At June 30, 2012, the fund balance was \$52.7 million, an increase of \$4.3 million. This good news was due to the City's continued efforts to control costs and growth in our economy. Council member Shane McFarland was complimentary of the staff that made it all happen.

McFarland observed the City paid off more than \$22 million in debt in 2012. He also pointed out that the City initially budgeted to use more than \$4 million of general fund's fund balance and instead realized budgetary savings that resulted in a \$4 million increase to fund balance.

"This equates to "about an \$8 million swing" he added.

McFarland commended not only city manager Rob Lyons but also department heads and city employees "who did more with less and saved the taxpayers a significant amount of money," he said.

Vice-Mayor Ron Washington was equally complimentary, pointing out specific areas of the audit report that display how tax dollars are spent. Vice-Mayor Washington pointed out the financial difficulty of running a government, especially during a recession.

He added that in his 14 years of service on the Murfreesboro City Council, he has not yet seen a tax increase.

On the city's website, [www.murfreesborotn.gov](http://www.murfreesborotn.gov), find the Open Government navigation bar tab near the bottom. Click on the Financial Reports tab and follow that to the new audit as well as past ones.

## 'boro briefs

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### **MWSD's O&M crew saves City big money**

Terry Taylor and crew saved the City of Murfreesboro \$554,749.44 by installing a 24-inch re-purified water line to what is known as the Coleman Farm, the cost-savings realized by avoiding the cost of a consultant.

The over-400 acre farm is where Murfreesboro Water and Sewer Department sprays the near-drinkable water left from its various irrigation projects, many in the City's Gateway District.

From June 26, 2012 through Oct. 22 the same year, a special crew of MWSD employees installed the proper piping and did its final cleanup.

Starting with what Portland Utilities, Inc. charged for a similar project in 2003 and breaking that down into single units, then applying the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to bring costs up to 2012 levels, the nearly \$1.4 million charged by the consultant was compared to the department's costs (\$816,785.32) to arrive at the \$554,749.44 in savings.

### **Information Technology needs your help naming new Intranet**

Your IT department is working hard to build an internal website where we will have the ability to communicate and share information. This internal website, or "intranet", will be a great asset for the employees of the City of Murfreesboro.

We would like to ask for your help in naming our new Intranet. Please submit your ideas using the form provided at [www.murfreesborotn.gov/nametheintranet](http://www.murfreesborotn.gov/nametheintranet). Submissions will be accepted until Feb. 22 and the winner announced March 1.

### **City offices close for President's Day**

All City of Murfreesboro offices and recreational facilities will be closed Feb. 18 to observe President's Day.

Murfreesboro's solid waste department will be on holiday schedule. Monday's garbage will be picked up Tuesday and Tuesday's on Wednesday.

February is  
Black His-  
tory Month  
"A genuine  
leader is not  
a searcher  
for consen-  
sus but a  
molder of  
consensus."

— Martin Luther  
King, Jr.

### **Legislature Day at Tennessee Fire and Codes Academy**

DEASON, Tenn. — Several legislators loaded a bus and traveled down to the Tennessee Fire and Codes Academy in Deason to gain insight into what the state's many fire services provide to the State of Tennessee.

A group of around 20 legislators walked through several stations set up by various agencies from multiple jurisdictions.

The groups got to experience a Class A Burn Pod evolution, watch a vehicle extrication demonstration, learn about hazardous materials and Paramedic/EMS response, were educated on the importance of fire prevention and investigation and much more.

The most exciting demonstration was a side-by-side room and contents fire with one room being sprinkled and the other not. The two rooms were designed with the same building construction, furnishing, and fuel loads. The ignition source for each room was also the same. The non-sprinkled room was completely engulfed in flames in under four minutes. The sprinkled side was nearly extinguished once the sprinkler triggered in less than one minute.

Murfreesboro Fire & Rescue Department's Fire Marshal's Office and Special Events Team were on hand for the activities.